Total declines by 48 in first quarter

Tide stemmed on dealership losses

Continued from Page 1

year with 3,637 car dealerships and rose to 3,664 on April 1. It was Chrysler's third gain in the last four quarters and was its best first-quarter performance since 1965.

This year's addition of 27 outlets for Chrysler compares with a dip of 29 in the first quarter of 1982.

In addition to its 3,664 car dealerships, Chrysler Corp. has eight outlets that handle only Dodge trucks. They are not included in the corporation's car-dealer total or in the Dodge car-franchise total.

Ford Motor had 5,403 car dealerships on April 1, down 11 from 5,414 on Jan. 1. It was the company's best first-quarter showing since 1978 and compared with a loss of 78 locations in the first quarter of last year.

Ford Motor has 100 outlets that handle only Ford heavy-duty trucks. They are not included in the company's car-dealer total or in the Ford Division car-franchise total.

U. S. FRANCHISES

	April 1, 1983	Jan. 1, 1983
AMERICAN MOTORS		
AMC	1,460	1,457
Renault	1,332	1,322
CHRYSLER CORP.		
Chrysler	2,695	2,665
Dodge	2,542	2,492
Imperial	419	425
Plymouth	2,619	2,587
FORD MOTOR CO.		
Ford	4,581	4,596
Lincoln	1,496	1,478
Mercury	2,591	2,581
GENERAL MOTORS		
Buick	2,915	2,910
Cadillac	1,580	1,575
Chevrolet	5,170	5,195
Oldsmobile	3,145	3,135
Pontiac	2,945	2,945
VOLKSWAGEN	920	934

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For GM, the first-quarter slip of 50 dealerships was only one-third as steep as the 145 that bowed out in the year-ago period. It was GM's lightest quarterly loss since the first three months of 1980.

GM had 10,110 car dealers on April 1, compared with 10,160 at the beginning of the year.

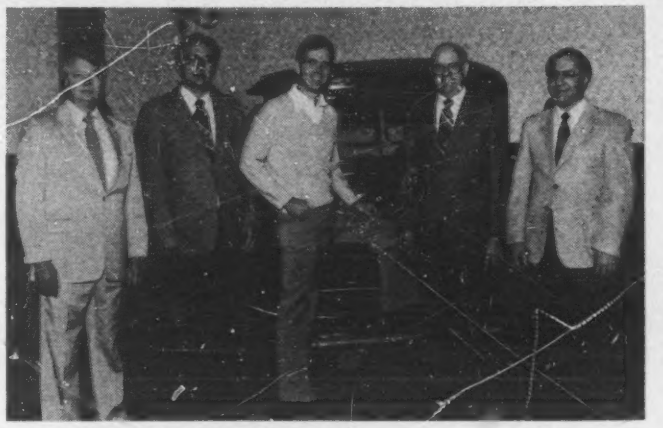
American Motors-Renault had 1,590 car dealers at the beginning of April, one more than on Jan. 1. There are 1,460 outlets for AMC and 1,332 for Renault, but 1,202 of them handle both makes. Thus the AMC-Renault dealership total is 1,590.

Dealer totals for Volkswagen were 920 on April 1 and 934 on Jan. 1.

Going back a year, there were 21,404 domestic-car dealerships on April 1, 1982, so the current total of 20,751 is down 653.

Year-to-year changes show an increase of 9 for Chrysler Corp. and dips of 72 for VW, 204 for Ford Motor and 400 for GM. The current AMC-Renault count is 55 higher than the AMC figure of a year ago. Renault was not included last year because Renault was not a U. S.-built car at that time.

The aggregate decline for the makers is 612. A change in the number of intercorporate duals brought the industry's drop to 653.



50th Anniversary Convention

Attending the Automobile Dealers Assn. of North Dakota's 50th anniversary convention in Fargo were, from left: B. Jack Norby, Norby Rath, Inc., Mandan, president; Gary Browning, M. J. McGuire, Inc., Rugby, director; James Hansen, Hansen Ford Sales, Inc., Grand Forks, vice president; Syl Schumacher, Schumacher's, Inc., Linton, NADA director, and Richard W. Stockman, Stockman Motors, Inc., Williston, immediate past president.

Canadian auto task force urges output commitments

OTTAWA. — More than 80,000 direct auto industry jobs in Canada could be the difference if recommendations made in an auto task force report submitted to Federal Minister Edward Lumley are adopted.

The 80,000 jobs would include 40,000 jobs in the motor vehicle and automotive parts industries with another 40,000 in supplier industries like steel, rubber, glass and textiles. In addition, it is projected, about 50,000 secondary "spinoff" jobs would result from the general increase in auto-related employment.

The task force, initiated to examine issues in the Canadian auto industry, including the loss of 24,000 jobs since the peak years of 1978-1979, is made up of representatives from groups directly involved in auto manufacturing, including the motor vehicle manufacturers, independent parts makers and the UAW.

The task force was co-chaired by UAW director for Canada, Robert White, and Patrick Lavelle, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers Assn. of Canada.

The trade policy changes recommended by the task force would require all vehicle manufacturers selling in the Canadian market to make binding commitments — phased over a period of time — comparable to the commitments presently undertaken by automakers operating under the Canada-U. S. Auto Pact.

Vehicle makers which meet these commitments would be allowed duty-free access to the Canadian market.

The objective is to ensure that anyone selling motor vehicles in the Canadian market will make a commensurate commitment to production, investment, purchasing and jobs in Canada.

The trade policy framework also identifies the need for Canada to develop strategies and incentives to encourage the development and expansion of a world-competitive indigenous automotive parts industry in Canada.

"In formulating the trade policy framework," the summary of the report says, "the task force has attempted to find a balance between free trade and protectionism."

The report also emphasizes that its proposals are no different from those already in place in other auto-producing nations.

The trade policy recommendations are a key part of a broad auto policy strategy mapped out in the report which included ongoing consultation between government and industry participants; correction of tax inequities; encouragement of technological innovation; retraining of workers; and provisions to ensure that any structural changes in the industry will occur with minimal negative effects on workers and their communities.

The task force recommends that until such time as the government is able to implement the proposed trade policy framework, the current voluntary restraint arrangement with the Japanese producers should be strengthened and continued.

The task force was created last December. The report itself is an examination of the Canadian auto industry, tracing its development, the effect of the Auto Pact, the impact of offshore competitors and the overall importance of the auto industry to the Canadian economy.

Its findings show that auto manufacturing accounts for 100,000 direct jobs and another 100,000 indirect jobs in Canada and supplies 60 percent of Canada's exports in manufactured goods.

obituaries

Drew C. Smith

PHILADELPHIA — Drew C. Smith, who retired in 1966 as director of dealer relations of Chrysler-Plymouth, died March 4.

James O. Fisher Sr.

PALM SPRINGS.—James O. (Joe) Fisher Sr., 91, pioneer auto dealer in Oregon, died April 23. Mr. Fisher sold Dodge, Oldsmobile, Volvo, Mazda and Ford vehicles in Portland, Ore.

Hal E. Rumble

DETROIT—Hal E. Rumble, 55, senior vice president - marketing, Ross Roy, Inc., died May 24. He spent his entire career in advertising, working for General Motors, then Brooke, Smith, French & Dorrance Advertising. He joined Ross Roy in 1960 when it merged with BSF&D.

Sawicki signs on

ROCHELLE, Ill.—Dan K. Sawicki now owns Sawicki Chevrolet-Cadillac, Inc., here.

NHTSA allows different type of headlamp

WASHINGTON. — Effective July 1, NHTSA will allow the optional use of headlamps with contoured lens surfaces and a new standardized light bulb.

The move was made in response to a petition from Ford Motor Co.

The new design permitting somewhat more aerodynamic front ends would improve fuel economy slightly and NHTSA says safety would be enhanced by allowing extra bulbs to be carried in a car for immediate replacement.

The options differ from current lamps that use round or rectangular dimensions. In this instance, greater design freedom is given by having no dimensions, but lamp beam patterns and mechanical aiming capability is not changed.

UAW local seeks early talks at Chrysler Canada

WINDSOR, Ont. — The UAW local representing Chrysler Canada workers here said it will ask for a July contract reopening and a $1-an-hour pay boost.

Canadian and U. S. UAW members at Chrysler are under separate one-year agreements expiring in January. In Canada, a master agreement covers all Chrysler locals.

The earliest a U. S. reopener might be acted on is July 28 when the union's Chrysler council holds a routine annual meeting in Huntsville, Ala.

Chrysler Canada said it has the reopener proposal under advisement. But, it said, negotiations on a complete new pact probably will start in November and a July reopener would be unusual.

Bill to revitalize industry starts long road in House

Continued from Page 1

Commerce Committee this week or at latest next week and since a move toward a third year of export restraint has started.

Because the bill involves looking at the antitrust laws with a view toward fostering joint activities, it must be assigned to the Judiciary Committee. Because it involves trade law changes, it goes to the Ways and Means Committee.

Because it involves changes in House procedure meant to streamline action, it goes to the Rules Committee. Because it gets into credit and interest rates, it also goes to the Banking Committee.

But most of all, it goes to the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Except for the central action section on how the International Trade Commission (ITC) should rescue the domestic companies once it finds "injury," the rest of Florio's bill is to set up groups to study problems and recommend solutions.

The main job goes to the Secretary of Commerce — thus the jurisdiction of the Dingell-Florio Committee on Energy and Commerce.

But then there is the industry advisory council (which Florio chairs) and that is composed of four management types from the auto companies, five labor representatives, one representative from the parts industry and two senators and two representatives. This council advises and consents like mad on almost everything — especially the fate of the imports after developing "strategy."

• The guts of the Florio bill — and one that can be viewed as an alternative to the UAW-backed local-content bill if it gets pulled out — involves the ITC initiating an investigation to see if imports are a "substantial cause of serious injury" and threat thereof to the domestic industry and if so, then the ITC can recommend relief by way of tariffs, quotas or domestic content requirements.

The ITC is busy monitoring the auto industry and writing reports on conditions as well as the effects of the remedies it suggests and — Congress or the President — puts in place.

Meanwhile, large parts of the rest of government are taking long looks at the auto industry. There is a task force on currency exchange stabilization. This includes the Secretaries of Commerce, State, Treasury, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, the U. S. Trade Representative, the head of the Congressional Budget Office and the U. S. Comptroller General.

Next comes a study group on antitrust laws, policies, and unfair practices. This has the Secretary of Commerce, the Attorney General, the U. S. Trade Representative, the chairman of the FTC, and the Comptroller General.

These luminaries look at antitrust and joint R&D ventures, joint export activities among domestics and what it is like for the foreign companies.

• Another group that has no real name but consists of the advisory council, the Secretaries of Commerce and Treasury and the U. S. Trade Representative, works out a way to eliminate or reduce tax advantages of the foreign companies.

Here Florio gives some direction: A balancing act between an excise tax on auto products sold in the U. S. and a credit to makers against their federal tax liability; give a tax credit to buyers of domestic makes or those that meet domestic content requirements or promote exports in various ways, and do all of this in such a way to lead to the highest possible auto production and employment in the U. S. and in such a way as to avoid retaliation while taking into account similar programs in foreign countries and their effectiveness.

And how much money does Florio think may be needed? Less than $1 million over five years.

Now, this is a broad approach and a thoughtful one that Florio finds more comfortable than the UAW local-content bill which he has — and for at least a while — will continue to support.

Putnam opens outlet

PUTNAM, Conn. — Putnam Ford-Mercury has opened here.

Year-to-date total is 24 pct. ahead of 1982

Auto production slips to 144,459

By Patricia Hoffman
Staff Writer

As overtime schedules wound down last week in preparation for the Memorial Day holiday, domestic car output slipped 6.93 percent from the previous week's total when 14 assembly points worked additional hours.

Last week the makers scheduled 144,459 cars, down from the prior week's 155,218, but up 10.30 percent from last year's 130,964.

Breakdown for the week by company was: General Motors, 58.31 percent; Ford Motor, 23.93 percent; Chrysler Corp., 12.39 percent; American Motors, 2.98 percent; Volkswagen of America, 1.63 percent, and Honda, 0.76 percent.

Year-to-date, there have been 2,605,366 automobiles produced, a 24.43 percent gain from last year's 2,093,802.

Daily overtime continued at five assembly points last week. GM's Detroit facility operated an additional 24 minutes on each of two shifts Monday through Friday.

The Chrysler Belvidere, Jefferson and Newark plants worked two nine-hour shifts, while the St. Louis point operated one nine-hour shift five days last week.

There was no Saturday overtime last week due to the holiday. All facilities are idle today (May 30) in observance of Memorial Day.

Canadian holiday trims production of cars, trucks

Four days of assembly last week due to the Victoria Day holiday pulled Canadian car production down 8.41 percent from the previous week's total. Output, however, soared 23.21 percent above last year's comparable holiday period.

The auto makers scheduled 22,492 units last week, down from 24,557 built the prior week, but up from last year's 18,255.

Year-to-date, the manufacturers have assembled 424,770 cars, a 14.27 percent gain from 371,733 finished in the comparable 1982 period.

Truck output last week, trimmed by the holiday plus changeover schedules at International Harvester's assembly points, was 10,080 units, 5.86 percent below the previous week's 10,707, and down 5.0 percent from last year's 10,610.

So far this year, 216,182 trucks have been assembled, down 1.89 percent from 220,336 at this time last year.

All car and truck facilities were idle Monday, May 23, in observance of Victoria Day.

International Harvester's Chatham and Vancouver assembly points were closed last week for model changeover. Operations there are slated to resume July 25.

All other facilities resumed normal operations last Tuesday.

Assembly of Chrysler Corp.'s Caravelle, Gran Fury, Diplomat and New Yorker Fifth Ave. models continues to fall at the company's Windsor car facility in preparation for the June 10 buildout.

Production of the M-bodies will be moved to Chrysler's St. Louis No. One plant for the 1984 model year. Windsor will then be retooled for assembly of the 1984 front-wheel-drive T-115 van/wagons to begin in October.

Truck production falls for week; 48,300 assembled

Downtime at Ford Motor's Michigan truck facility pulled last week's domestic truck production down 8.43 percent from the previous week's total, but output jumped 10.33 percent from last year's comparable period.

Ouaput last week was targeted at 48,300 units, down from 52,744 built the previous week, but up from last year's 43,779 trucks.

Year-to-date, the makers have manufactured 902,692 units, a 9.34 percent gain from 825,615 produced in the comparable period last year.

Operations at Ford's Michigan truck facility were idle last week (May 23) due to overstocked inventory.

Chrysler Corp.'s Belvidere assembly point operated two daily nine-hour shifts Monday through Friday last week. The company's Warren plant worked one daily nine-hour shift five days.

There was no Saturday overtime scheduled due to the holiday downtime. All truck facilities are idle today (May 30) in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.

Datsun dealer fails in try to stop competitor's move

SACRAMENTO. — Martin D. Morganstern, who has operated Daly City Datsun since May, 1975, lost his effort to persuade the California New Motor Vehicle Board that Martin Swig's Autopacific, Inc., should not be permitted to move Van Ness Datsun to new quarters in San Francisco.

Swig, who owns 88 percent of the Autopacific stock as well as Mazda, Isuzu, Saab and Alfa Romeo dealerships and an ownership interest in a Toyota dealership through a separate corporation, plans to move all of his operations in late June to a huge new San Francisco auto center.

Swig's new operation will be in a 500,000-square-foot building occupying an eight-acre site about 1½ miles south of Van Ness Ave., considered San Francisco's "Auto Row."

"Escalating real estate values have made Van Ness uneconomic," Swig said. "In order to reverse the decline of the retail auto business in our city, we will establish this new auto center.

"Showrooms for the initial five dealerships," Swig said, "will stand side-by-side along a pedestrian concourse. Each dealership will be separately managed and no cross-selling will be permitted."

The parts and service operations will be segregated according to car line while the used cars, body shop and general offices will be consolidated, he said.

In addition to the new-car dealerships, Swig's plans for the auto center call for an auto-buff bookstore, a high-grade auto accessory store and "an elegant espresso bar" as well as a public meeting area to be used by car clubs in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Morganstern hired a law firm and demanded a hearing before Kent S. Hori, administrative law judge for the state board.

In presenting Morganstern's protests, attorney Peter Anderson argued that Daly City Datsun would be adversely affected by Swig's relocation and that the move would also have "an adverse effect on the retail motor vehicle business and the consuming public in the relevant market area."

Morganstern also insisted that Nissan franchises in that market area are providing both adequate competition and convenient consumer care for buyers and owners of Nissan vehicles.

Swig's attorneys told the board that a major reason for moving out of the Van Ness Ave. location was traffic congestion and inefficiency in the service department facilities.

Judge Hori, in his rejection of Morganstern's protest, agreed that by Nissan standards the Van Ness Datsun facilities "for parts, service and customer and employe parking have been inadequate since the mid 1970s."

U. S. CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended May 28, 1983	Week Ended May 29, 1982	Week Ended May 21, 1983	May to Date	Jan. 1 to May 29, 1982	Jan. 1 to May 28, 1983
AMERICAN MOTORS	4,300	1,400*	4,120	15,169	24,550*	72,316
AMC Total	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,071
Concord	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
Eagle	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,068
Renault Total	4,300	.....	4,120	15,169	.....	68,245
Alliance	4,300	.....	4,120	15,169	.....	68,245
CHRYSLER CORP.	17,900	15,757	22,096	80,300	252,705	347,960
Plymouth Total	4,900	7,139	7,423	26,793	105,927	125,773
Horizon	2,300	2,316	3,043	10,218	31,463	42,727
Reliant	2,500	4,823	4,152	15,804	74,464	81,003
Caravelle ('83)	100	.....	228	771	.....	2,043
Chrysler Total	5,300	2,574	5,568	21,552	48,225	84,444
LeBaron	2,500	2,574	2,656	10,393	48,225	40,268
Chrysler E-Class	2,800	.....	2,912	11,159	.....	44,176
Dodge Total	7,700	6,044	9,105	31,955	98,553	137,743
Omni	2,800	2,451	3,255	12,788	29,239	47,198
Aries	3,600	2,612	3,832	12,513	55,416	59,332
Dodge 400	800	981	1,211	3,766	13,898	14,535
Dodge 600	500	.....	807	2,888	.....	16,688
FORD MOTOR	34,569	34,291	38,273	132,393	468,534	607,744
Ford Division	21,908	23,141	24,177	82,794	298,963	395,818
Escort	6,202	8,669	7,630	24,010	128,539	112,858
Fairmont	.....	4,174	.....	.....	50,634	23,728
Mustang	3,234	4,088	3,148	9,737	54,224	54,231
LTD/Granada	3,099	3,536	3,602	13,770	46,013	74,289
Thunderbird	5,207	2,385	5,698	21,250	16,181	85,447
Crown Victoria/Ford	1,776	.....	2,041	7,615	.....	37,669
EXP	.....	289	.....	.....	3,372	1,184
Tempo	2,390	.....	2,058	6,412	.....	6,412
L-M Division	12,661	11,150	14,096	49,599	169,571	211,926
Mercury Total	9,897	9,072	11,334	38,769	127,645	167,056
Lynx	1,198	2,353	1,413	4,889	37,959	27,567
Capri	910	831	1,024	2,612	13,170	10,578
Zephyr	.....	1,336	.....	.....	16,061	8,601
Marquis/Cougar	1,921	1,843	2,173	7,745	22,277	31,000
Cougar/XR7	3,330	838	3,924	13,269	5,246	42,417
Gr. Marquis/Marquis	1,895	1,843	2,201	8,205	32,216	44,554
LN7	.....	28	.....	.....	716	290
Topaz	643	.....	599	2,049	.....	2,049
Lincoln Total	2,764	2,078	2,762	10,830	41,926	44,870
Continental ('82)	278	415	273	1,069	8,917	7,181
Lincoln	1,563	1,090	1,569	6,145	18,518	22,560
Mark VI	923	573	920	3,616	14,491	15,129
GENERAL MOTORS	84,240	79,416	87,626	328,907	1,306,432	1,526,438
Buick Division	20,452	18,794	19,467	76,642	306,544	353,528
Skylark	3,540	3,183	1,756	8,520	55,346	39,903
Skyhawk J	1,356	3,364	1,618	6,013	39,952	29,860
Century	4,196	2,770	4,286	15,432	51,439	61,749
Regal	4,393	4,680	4,422	19,412	78,141	104,009
Buick	6,107	3,650	6,509	23,818	66,610	100,697
Riviera	860	1,147	876	3,447	15,056	17,310
Cadillac Division	6,443	5,251	7,241	26,668	102,527	139.572
Cimarron	263	.....	307	1,168	1,401	9,210
Seville	740	591	752	2,967	10,703	15,171
Eldorado	1,660	1,025	1,684	6,654	26,345	32,936
Cadillac	3,780	3,635	4,498	15,879	64,078	82,255
Chevrolet Division	28,558	25,685	29,044	107,065	406,533	472,381
Chevette	4,155	6,133	3,758	12,318	89,748	79,300
Cavalier	5,864	1,434	6,011	24,963	36,803	100,746
Celebrity	4,245	1,868	3,687	13,239	28,448	37,487
Camaro	5,232	4,815	5,284	18,202	92,678	79,439
Citation	1,740	4,994	1,773	6,853	69,396	42,915
Malibu	3,304	3,542	3,703	13,852	43,916	63,317
Monte Carlo	1,848	1,822	2,329	8,463	24,444	37,900
Chevrolet	1,570	469	1,879	6,898	8,735	22,882
Corvette	600	608	620	2,277	12,365	8,395
Oldsmobile Division	19,844	15,807	21,777	83,374	315,287	405,254
Omega	1,520	1,726	813	4,116	35,127	25,756
Firenza	1,018	963	1,414	4,458	28,620	19,716
Cutlass	5,280	4,128	5,861	22,887	77,165	118,021
Cutlass/Ciera	4,423	2,869	5,216	19,389	50,367	78,181
Oldsmobile	6,863	5,251	7,722	29,566	109,476	147,157
Toronado	740	870	751	2,958	14,532	16,423
Pontiac Division	8,943	13,879	10,097	35,158	175,541	155,703
Acadian†	.....	445	993	1,451	5,086	7,272
2000	2,345	1,329	2,309	9,769	12,663	40,508
1000	1,580	1,577	1,725	4,756	10,903	16,855
Firebird	2,520	3,188	2,193	8,196	53,390	37,655
Phoenix	430	1,634	398	1,919	17,130	11,944
G. Prix/B'ville ('83)	2,068	3,711	2,479	9,067	64,498	41,469
6000	.....	1,995	.....	.....	11,871	.....
HONDA	1,100	.....	1,090	4,222	.....	12,677
VOLKSWAGEN	2,350	.....	2,013	6,305	40,018	38,231
CHECKER	.....	100*	.....	.....	1,563	.....
Total Cars, U. S.	144,459	130,964	155,218	567,296	2,093,802	2,605,366

TRUCK PRODUCTION IN U. S.†

	Week Ended May 28, 1983	Week Ended May 29, 1982	Week Ended May 21, 1983	May to Date	Jan. 1 to May 29 1982	Jan. 1 to May 28, 1983
CHEVROLET	17,471	15,646	17,786	71,212	280,790	311,874
DODGE	2,600	2,929	3,140	11,535	54,377	54,742
FORD	17,672	14,559	21,345	79,901	295,254	356,528
GMC	5,972	6,399	5,953	22,224	104,550	105,304
INTERNATIONAL	1,245	1,196	1,250	4,365	21,662	19,967
VOLKSWAGEN	.....	.....	.....	146	7,062	2,079
JEEP	2,290	2,000*	2,220	8,622	35,990*	31,198
AM GENERAL	50*	50*	50*	200*	930*	1,000*
MISCELLANEOUS	1,000*	1,000*	1,000*	4,000*	25,000*	20,000*
Total Trucks, U. S.	48,300	43,779	52,744	202,205	825,615	902,692

CANADIAN TRUCK PRODUCTION

	Week Ended May 28, 1983	Week Ended May 29, 1982	Week Ended May 21, 1983	May to Date	Jan. 1 to May 29, 1982	Jan. 1 to May 28, 1983
CHRYSLER CORP.	2,204	2,456	2,540	10,184	42,584	56,117
FORD MOTOR	2,836	3,189	3,540	13,381	57,438	55,905
GENERAL MOTORS	5,040	4,753	4,386	21,404	115,094	100,944
INTERNATIONAL	.....	212	241	742	5,220	3,216
Total Trucks, Canada	10,080	10,610	10,707	45,711	220,336	216,182
N. American Trucks	58,380	54,389	63,451	247,916	1,045,951	1,118,874

†—Now includes window van production. *—Estimated.
Jeep includes commercial only. AM General includes government-destined vehicles.

CANADIAN CAR PRODUCTION

	Week Ended May 28, 1983	Week Ended May 29, 1982	Week Ended May 21, 1983	May to Date	Jan. 1 to May 29, 1982	Jan. 1 to May 28, 1983
AMERICAN MOTORS	657	488	819	3,114	11,307	12,751
CHRYSLER CORP.	3,488	4,261	4,424	18,488	70,242	95,791
FORD MOTOR	7,632	6,887	8,656	27,311	130,247	84,089
GENERAL MOTORS	10,535	6,394	10,478	47,090	155,425	227,819
VOLVO	180	225	180	810	4,512	4,320
Total Cars, Canada	22,492	18,255	24,557	96,813	371,733	424,770
N. American Cars	166,951	149,219	179,775	664,109	2,465,535	3,030,136
N. American Trucks	58,380	54,389	63,451	247,916	1,045,951	1,118,874
North American Cars and Trucks	225,331	203,608	243,226	912,025	3,511,486	4,149,010

†—All Acadians and Caravelles are built for sale in Canada. *—Estimated.

6/6/83
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June 6, 1983

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58th year—$40 per year, $1.00 per copy

NHTSA delays comfort fix for seat belts

By Helen Kahn
Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON. — Government regulation to make seat belts on cars and light trucks more comfortable and more convenient will be delayed until 1986 models.

NHTSA's final rule means that Safety Standard 208, issued in the dying days of the Carter Administration, has been delayed three years from its effective date for 1983 models — one year by the Reagan Administration in response to petitions for reconsideration and now an extra two years.

NHTSA said the further delay is needed because of "concerns that have arisen within the agency regarding the efficacy and level of stringency of certain of the requirements and because of the unsettled state of future plans for seat belt designs."

This is partly affected, NHTSA said, by the rescission of the passive restraint standard—now pending before the U. S. Supreme Court—because the comfort and convenience standard was assumed to apply to passive belts. And it has questions about stringency that led NHTSA to propose the extra two years last November.

• The further delay was objected to by the Idaho Transportation Department — the lone dissenter — but all the vehicle makers and the American Seat Belt Council supported the delay.

In fact, some auto makers wanted an indefinite stay, but the agency felt a definite time frame would be useful although it also noted it could later make adjustment for leadtime, if necessary.

Ford Motor Co. noted it had been experimenting with a particular seat belt design for nearly two years and is still uncertain whether the design can consistently meet the somewhat conflicting requirements for full belt retraction, 0.7-pound chest force limitation and the retractive force requirements of Standard 209.

In other words, the belt has to be loose enough to be comfortable on the chest but taut enough to spring back into place, and these requirements appear to be in conflict.

Finally, NHTSA said that it is necessary to look at all the restraint standards — including the passive one in litigation — before arriving at a decision about comfort and convenience.

Alfasud successor?

Alfa Romeo's new 33

Although Alfa Romeo is billing its 33 as "all new," there is a lot of carryover in mechanical philosophy from the Alfasud, such as the flat-four engine and five-speed transmission. The 33, which will go on sale this month in Europe, will offer two engine options, each based on the same flat-four-cylinder: 1.3 liters producing 79 HP and 1.5 liters producing 85 HP. Observers believe that the 33 spells the end of the 11-year-old Alfasud. Story on Page 6.

GM, Ford unwrap new cut-rate loans; more programs due

By Joseph Bohn
Marketing Editor

General Motors and Ford Motor Co. were quick to launch new low-interest programs to replace those that expired May 31. Datsun extended cut-rate financing on trucks, and Toyota is offering a new incentive on trucks.

Chrysler and American Motors are expected to announce new programs this week. Chrysler previously extended its low-interest loans and/or rebates through June 10. Volkswagen is not planning any special incentives.

GM's "Buyer's Bonus Program" offers 8.8 percent financing through GMAC on small cars and compact pickups delivered during June 1-30. Contracts run up to 48 months.

Financing applies to Chevrolet Chevette, Cavalier and Citation; Pontiac 1000, 2000 and Phoenix; Oldsmobile Firenza and Omega; Buick Skyhawk and Skylark; Cadillac Cimarron, and Chevrolet S-10/GMC S-15 compact pickups.

Those same vehicles are covered with a higher 9.9 percent APR rate July 1-31.

Dealers contribute 70 percent of their finance reserve toward paying for the lower rate.

On the Chevette/Pontiac 1000 and S-10/S-15 pickups only, consumers have a choice of a $300 rebate in lieu of low-interest financing. There are no dealer contributions to the rebates.

GM also has 11.9 percent financing for up to 36 months and 12.9 percent financing for 37 to 48 months on all other cars and trucks not covered by its 8.8 and 9.9 percent programs.

• The lower rates—8.8 percent and 9.9 percent — are being widely publicized on TV, radio and in newspapers by GMAC, car divisions and dealers.

However, the company is doing no promotion on the 11.9 percent and 12.9 percent flex rates. Dealers also are not required to contribute any of

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New Ford models off to fast start

Tempo and Topaz excite dealers

By Joseph Bohn
Marketing Editor

If Ford Tempo and Mercury Topaz sell as well as dealers anticipate, Ford Motor Co. may have its first unequivocally successful car since Escort.

But, given today's competitive market, dealers readily acknowledge that they still face a tough selling job.

As Ed Mullane, Mullane Ford, Bergenfield, N. J., pointed out: "The reality is, we're not the only frog in the pond. In the old days, when Ford had new Falcons and Thunderbirds, there was a waiting list three miles long. Today, it's a new ballgame."

But Mullane, along with a coterie of Ford Dealers Alliance members, who were among those surveyed by AUTOMOTIVE NEWS after introduction, expressed enthusiasm for the new products and their sales potential.

"We (Dealers Alliance) have been critical of Ford for not having the hardware and putting us out in the desert for a long time," Mullane said.

"Now we got it, and it's good. We don't have to take second seat to anybody. People who drive the car fall in love with it. I'd much rather have it than not have it," Mullane concluded.

Indeed, the stream of praise for the products, often coming from erstwhile critics, is itself something of a novelty.

If there was criticism, it was of the cars being launched so close to Memorial Day weekend, when showroom traffic is light — particularly in California. Dealers also found themselves with little stock, all of which left a reading of public reaction somewhat tenuous. Public introduction of Tempo/Topaz was May 26.

• Santa Ana Lincoln-Mercury, Santa Ana, Calif., sits squarely in the middle of import country. Coincidentally, it also had the biggest success of those surveyed, quickly selling out its stock of six Topazes, according to Ken Kaiden, sales manager.

Public awareness of domestic cars must run high in Orange County. Kaiden said one Topaz went to a man who thought Lincoln-Mercury was part of General Motors and Topaz was a foreign car.

"He didn't know what it was — just saw it on TV and came in and bought it," Kaiden added.

The dealership did take two imports — a Volkswagen Scirocco and a Datsun 210 — in on Tempo trades and had people with "Volvos and Mercedes who didn't buy but loved the car," Kaiden added.

"They thought it was a cross between a BMW and a Mercedes. It's just a complete car for us," he concluded.

California Tempos and Topazes have more equipment than in the East and Midwest. Kaiden's early cars averaged $9,300 sticker prices. He sold mostly Topaz GS models.

In other parts of the country, sticker prices were averaging about $8,000.

Of his profit margins, Kaiden said, "We would have discounted the cars if we had to, but we haven't had to yet." He plans to run a media campaign with a $7,488 Topaz as the drawing card.

• In nearby Orange City, Calif., Villa Ford, which steadily ranks among Ford's 100 top-volume dealerships, had seven or eight Tempos but only three cleaned up in time for early delivery.

Owner Herbert Baldwin, said each of his salesmen had "one or two" Tempo orders he was working on. Baldwin praised the mileage, performance and qual-

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Bidwell to direct Chrysler marketing

By Al Fleming
Industry Editor

Bidwell's back and Iacocca's got him.

Rumor and speculation ended last Thursday (June 2) when Chrysler Corp.'s board of directors, meeting in New York City, elected Bennett E. Bidwell executive vice-president — sales and marketing of the nation's No. 3 auto company, effective immediately.

Thus, for the first time in nearly five years, former Ford Motor Co. executives Bidwell and Lee A. Iacocca are together again.

Iacocca, now chairman of Chrysler, was fired as president of Ford Motor Co. in July, 1978, by Chairman Henry Ford II. Bidwell left his position as group vice president, car and truck group, North American Automotive Operations, at Ford in 1981 to become president of Hertz Corp.

At Chrysler, Bidwell, 56, succeeds John B. Naughton Sr., 61, who was named executive vice-president, office of the chairman, a new position.

Bidwell will direct sales and marketing for Chrysler Corp. and Chrysler-Plymouth and Dodge Divisions. He will report

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breaking news

Chrysler has cash, delays bond sale

DETROIT.—Chrysler Corp. has indefinitely delayed its previously announced plans to sell up to $200 million in bonds to the public to partially finance the redemption of $400 million in federally guaranteed publicly held notes. Chairman Lee A. Iacocca said, "We will pay off the $400 million entirely from our cash reserves. We don't need the bond offering to do the job."

The $400 million payment on June 15 will amount to one-third of the $1.2 billion in guaranteed notes that Chrysler sold between June, 1980, and February, 1981, under terms of the Chrysler Corp. Loan Guarantee Act of 1979.

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